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“CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER, EXCEPT THEY BE AGREED?”

FROM THE RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

AFTER all that has been said about right wing, left wing, and the central body, it still remains true that we are, as a denomination, composed of only two schools, or parties, the evangelical and the radical, at the head of which respectively are the names of Channing and Parker. Or, if there is a central body, it consists of a good number of the clergy and laity, who yet belong, by decided connection and sympathy, to one or the other of these schools or parties, but who yet have it for their one great object and aim to keep the two incongruous, antagonistic divisions from final separation.

The evangelical party are by no means, as sometimes unjustly represented, leaning or verging toward Orthodoxy, however greatly many of them prefer Orthodoxy to much that passes under the name of Unitarianism. They are not extremists, except as they have an extreme aversion to what is destructive of Christianity, and an extreme veneration for that which is essentially connected with it. They stand where Channing stood. They side with the Wares and the Peabodys, with Greenwood and Buckminster, with Walker and Eliot, with Nichols and Hosmer, with Hall and Briggs and Farley. They teach what *they* have taught, and believe as *they* have believed, in regard to what has been considered as fundamental to the Christian faith. As the great question that is at the very centre of all our discussions and controversies is this, “What think ye of Christ?” they say with Channing, concerning the New Testament records which present to us the history of Jesus, that “they were written by the real and zealous propagators of Christianity, and are records of real convictions and actual events.” They maintain, with Channing, that “the Gospels must be true; they were drawn from a living original; they were founded on reality:” that “the character of Jesus is not a fiction; he was what he claimed to be, and what his followers attested:” that “Jesus not only *was*, he is still, the Son of God, the

Saviour of the world." With Channing they say, "We believe firmly in the Divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with divine authority, and was a bright image of the divine perfections ;" and that "in Christ's words, we hear God speaking ; in his miracles, we behold God acting ; in his character and life, we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love." And finally, with Channing they affirm that "there is no such thing as Christianity without Christ ;" and that the Christian minister should treat "especially of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the theme of prophecy, the revealer of grace and truth, the Saviour from sin, the Conqueror of death, who hath left us an example of immaculate virtue, whose love passeth knowledge, and whose history, combining the strange and touching contrasts of the cross, the resurrection, and a heavenly throne, surpasses all other records in interest and grandeur." Channing taught many other things with regard to which there is no real dispute among Unitarians ; but what we have quoted indicates clearly what he believed and preached about Jesus Christ. This view of the divine Author and Founder of our holy religion is the one bright, golden thread that runs through all his life and writings, and from which they catch their highest beauty and grandeur.

All this was good Unitarianism once. Anything essentially unlike it would not have been tolerated in Unitarian pulpits. Did Channing and his co-laborers ever look forward to the time when doctrines and ideas, exactly the reverse of these which we have adduced from his pages, would be taught by our ministers, and would be just as much entitled to the name of Christianity and just as deserving of the sympathy and support of our churches as those which he and all who were associated with him deemed so essential to the gospel faith? Some one has said, that on a certain occasion the great and good man exclaimed, "This Unitarianism, which some people think the last word of the human mind, is only its first lisp, the vestibule of truth." Very likely he did use just these words. They are what we might have expected from him. Who would not say the same? Who imagines that we have begun to comprehend the length and the breadth, the height and the depth, of the religion of Jesus Christ? Who does

not believe that, in all the future unfoldings of its mighty truths, and in all the endless applications which are yet to be made of them to the wants and interests of the race, we are in the coming time to see in Christianity a power and a glory of which we now have but the faintest conception? But who that is in his senses can suppose for an instant that Channing ever dreamed, in all his fond, ecstatic visions of what was one day to be, that the Christ was to fade away from human sight, and the Unitarianism to which he devoted his life would eventually come, in the progress of humanity, to deny and confound that which he so sacredly believed to be the light and glory of the world, declaring that the Gospels and Epistles are *not* records of real convictions and actual events; that the character of Jesus which they present *is* a fiction; that he is *not* the Son of God and the Saviour of the world; that he was *not* possessed of divine authority or of a sinless nature; that Christianity has *no* necessary connection with him, and that Christian teachers *are* justified in ignoring him in their official ministrations? There is such a thing as common sense—but a supposition like this is not to be classed under that head. Dr. Channing confidently looked forward to the time when Christ would be still more honored by men than he ever had been in the past. Progress, with him, did not mean a reducing of the Christ to the level of sinful men,—a lessening of his hold upon the veneration, love, and gratitude of the world. "The character of Christ," he writes, "though delineated in an age of great moral darkness, has stood the scrutiny of ages; and in proportion as men's moral sentiments have been refined, its beauty has been more seen and felt."

We are aware that it has been attempted, in certain quarters, to make it appear that such views of Christianity as Channing and others who sympathized with him thus cherished and inculcated, are not denied and set aside by many of our ministers, as has often been alleged. Various writers for our denominational journals have sought to comfort the churches by telling them that no such great differences of opinion prevail amongst us, after all; and that the accounts which the Channing men have given of radical utterances

have been quite false, or, at all events, greatly exaggerated. None know better than these very writers that, so far from such accounts having been false or exaggerated, the half has not yet been told. Had we full files of the "Christian Examiner" and the "Radical," and of the "Christian Register" and "Liberal Christian," we could easily present, in proof of this, a mass of testimony which would astonish those who have not been familiar with our current literature. We only propose to give just now such extracts as we readily cull from stray copies of Unitarian magazines and papers which are immediately at hand. We have neither time nor inclination to look further. These shall be sufficient to satisfy any reasonable man of the truth of every charge which has been made. We might add many more, of a similar character, as showing what radicals teach concerning the nature of God, the duty or efficacy of prayer, the claims of the church, and of its sacraments and its worship. We have only space now for a few illustrations of what they say about Jesus Christ.

As we have intimated, the great and generally recognized leader of the radicals is Theodore Parker, as Channing is also the accepted head of the evangelical party. Mr. Parker's view of Christ is largely set forth in the following extracts, taken from the pamphlet edition of the two sermons which he preached on the occasion of his leaving the Melodeon and entering Music Hall, as a place of worship for himself and his congregation: "I take not the Bible for my master, nor yet the church; nor even Jesus of Nazareth for my master. . . . He (Jesus) is my best historic ideal of human greatness; not without errors, not without the stain of his times, and, I presume, of course, not without sins; for men without sins exist in the dreams of girls, not in real fact. You never saw such an one, nor I, and we never shall."

Following the lead of Mr. Parker, our radical preachers and writers have more and more widely, with every advancing year, given expression to the same or similar views of Jesus. They have indeed, at times, spoken of him as "a noble Galilean youth," commended his "homely virtues," and even granted that he was "the best of all the sons of men." But they have very extensively held and taught that he was not

without error or sin, and there have not been wanting those who have compared him unfavorably with Socrates and other great and good men.

Thus Rev. Samuel Johnson, in his small work entitled "Worship of Jesus," having said, "Of the real Jesus we know but little with any certainty, and most of what we may infer from the data before us must be spoken provisionally," alludes to "imperfections in the New-Testament Jesus," and adds that "we do not *know* that he was *even so great* as the record shows." Mr. Johnson, in the same book, ascribes to Jesus "a certain personal absolutism and intolerance towards other teachers and those who did not accept him," and remarks of religious faith which centres in an historical person, that it is something that is destined to "evaporate and disappear, having done its work well in its day, and needing now only to be quietly laid away to its rest."

Rev. F. E. Abbot, in the first number of his "Index," gives the following as the fiftieth of his affirmations: "Christianity is the faith of the soul's childhood; Free Religion is the faith of the soul's manhood. In the gradual growth of mankind out of Christianity into Free Religion lies the only hope of the spiritual perfection of the individual and the spiritual unity of the race." In the prospectus of the "Index," Mr. Abbot had said of that paper, "It will pay no deference to the authority of the Bible, the Church, or the Christ, but rest solely on the authority of right reason and good conscience. It will trust no revelation but that of universal human faculties."

In answer to the question, "If Christ is not the way, then is he *in* the way?" the editor of the "Radical" (see June number, 1867) says, "Your Christ is in the way, and much in the way. The genius of our age, the reason of the new world, repudiates the Christian system." Again he writes, (see "Radical" for August, 1867), "We cannot be fettered by obligations to honor men. It is time to let Jesus rest. His fame has become a grievance the free spirit avoids. . . . Jesus is made a stumbling-block to the generation. As such, he impedes progress, and must be removed." And yet again, (see "Radical" for April, 1868), "Humanity is universal. It is equality, unity, liberty, reason, progress, peace. Christian-

ity is partial. It is aristocratic, limited in its development, slavish, at war with the expansion of the human mind."

But it may be said that these men from whom we have quoted withdrew themselves at length from the Unitarian body, and that their names are not now in the Year Book of the denomination. Not the less, however, are they invited * or welcomed to Unitarian pulpits, by those who have always sympathized with their views, and who regret that they ever nominally separated themselves from us. Not the less has the "Radical" continued to find a large number of friendly contributors among our ministers, and a larger number of our clergy still, who have recommended it to their people, and sought

* Since this article was sent to the printer, the writer's eye has fallen upon a letter published in the "Christian Leader," of Sept. 24, and containing a striking confirmation of the above statement. The letter is written by a prominent Universalist minister, Rev. H. R. Nye, and is entitled, "A CURIOUS ORDINATION SERMON." We give the following extract, only premising that Mr. Connor is a Vice-President of the Free Religious Association, in whose second Annual Report the reader may find, if he cares, a fuller exposition of this radical preacher's views. But to the account of the sermon given at the ordination and installation of a Christian minister as pastor of a Christian church!

"The Rev. Mr. McLeod was ordained and installed as pastor of the Unitarian Church in Chicopee, Mass., on Wednesday evening last. The sermon, by Rev. Rowland Connor, of Boston, from the words, 'Rightly dividing the word of life,' was probably the most singular discourse ever given in New England upon the consecration of a young man to the *Christian* ministry. In the early times, Mr. Connor said, the king, legislator, and priest were all combined in one man. But as the world grew older, and civilization increased, and church and state were severed, a division of work had taken place, and now the office of the priest had nearly vanished away. In New England formerly the minister was the cultivated man, the teacher of the town. Now, in any congregation, there were men better versed in science and law and history and literature than ministers in general; and *the* ministry was filled up with third-rate men. The lyceum is more popular than the church. The people like the vigor and freshness of supplies, and there are signs that a permanent ministry cannot be maintained! The sermon dwelt on the foibles of the ministry, and seemed a studied attempt to depreciate its work and bring it into contempt. At its close there was an effort, for a moment, to show what *the* ministry (the word 'Christian' was studiously shunned) should and should not preach. It should not preach theology. The world had outgrown that. It should 'set the facts of life in their right relation'! And this without theology, without any reference to God, or the origin, nature, and destiny of man! There was but one reference to God, and that merely incidental, when he said, 'Once priests mediated between God and man.' There was but one allusion to the Bible, and that was to throw contempt upon it. There was no recognition of immortality. There was not one reference to Christ nor Christianity in the sermon from beginning to end."

to extend its circulation. Let it not be supposed for a moment that, because Mr. Johnson and Mr. Abbot have disconnected themselves from the denomination, they are therefore more radical than many other clergymen who still belong to it. Nor let it be forgotten that, while the former consistently repudiate the name so long as they reject the substance of Christianity, the latter do not hesitate to hold to the one while they discard the other. Mr. Abbot claims, justly, that his "Index," as well as he himself, stands squarely outside of Christianity. Yet by no means a few of our ministers, whose names are in the Year Book, might honestly write to the editor, with Rev. N. M. Mann, pastor of the Unitarian Church in Rochester, N. Y., "I need not tell you that I read the 'Index' with interest, and that my enjoyment of it is almost complete. You know enough of my thought to expect as much." (See "Index," Feb. 12, 1870.) Let us see what some of these ministers really say. We shall quote from sermons, lectures, essays, letters, and conversations, while we permit the lavish editor of the "Register" to keep his gold dollars to himself.

Rev. John Weiss, in the November "Radical," of 1867, urges "the great work of emancipating our minds from all the Old Testaments and New Testaments, supernaturally interpreted, from old statements and new statements, from specialities of every description, from partialities and personalities, from temperaments of every shade and color, leaving them out of the way, putting them down, and trampling them under foot."

Rev. Samuel Longfellow, in a letter printed in the "Christian Register," Feb. 4, 1865, says, "The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is nullified by that of a permanent Intercessor and official Mediator. The prayers are addressed 'through the Lord Jesus Christ;' in the hymns his name is put for that of God; the sermon founds every doctrine on the authority of his words, and illustrates every appeal by reference to his example. The very benediction is incomplete without his name. Thus, whatever of Theism is preached is accompanied by a Christism that virtually contradicts it. You may count all this phraseology among 'the proprieties of the Christian platform.' To me it seems the tags and

fringes of a theology we have outgrown ; the dead branches which need to be purged away."

The manner in which Mr. Longfellow would purge away these "dead branches" is perhaps indicated in the following extract in a lecture published by him in "The Radical," May, 1867: "What Jesus was, and what he did, indeed, we can never exactly know. This much, at least, I think, is proved by these many attempts to reconstruct his life on a historic basis,—that we no longer have the means of constructing it with any certainty."

Rev. O. B. Frothingham says of the Christ of John's Gospel (see "Radical," Oct., 1867), "The love of the Christ runs to sentiment ; and the more intense it is, the more it is unreal. It is such love as persecutors and bigots have been animated by, rather than philanthropists and reformers. It has fired more dogmatic zeal than humane enthusiasm. It has taken out of society more of vital will than it has infused into it." And again (see "Radical," Jan., 1868), "The Christ is harsh, dogmatical, assuming, despotic ; he neither prays nor pities ; it is for his own glory that he raises Lazarus from the dead ; it is for his own glory that he intercedes for his disciples. His robes are imperial, and his spirit wears them well." The "Third Annual Report of the Free Religious Association" makes Mr. Frothingham proclaim Christianity "a gorgeous romance."

Rev. C. A. Bartol writes thus of the Preamble of the National Conference: "A Preamble, after warm threefold discussion from year to year, is re-adopted to express the fundamental Unitarian faith by the single article of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. But the moral sense disowns this soleness or supremacy. To make him a finality is to make him a fetish, and we have a fetish now regularly installed in the Unitarian Church, occupying room which the only adorable Spirit should fill." ("The Radical," Jan., 1867.)

Rev. E. C. Towne says ("Christian Examiner," March, 1867), "The fullness of the Godhead ! It would not be in a race of Christs ! It surely was not in the man who found his will, not God's will ! No more did Jesus absolutely illustrate divine humanity. He did not even affirm it. 'I and

my father are one' is in the intensest spirit of 'my will;' but we need not accept this as coming from Jesus. We must certainly doubt the historical value of the Gospel which puts this flagrant egotism into the mouth of Jesus." Again Mr. Towne writes, (see "The Radical," April, 1867), "'Christianity without Christ!' exclaims the horrified literalist. Yes, just that; just as humanity without Adam, or Calvinism without Calvin. The historical first example does not constitute the thing itself. Granting that Christianity is a fruit of the Divine Presence with man, it is perfectly possible that Jesus and his Jewish disciples, being among the earliest, were, in some respects, the poorest fruit of this indwelling divinity, which has only gradually wrought out the consummate plan of Infinite Wisdom." Mr. Towne differs in his view but little, if at all, so far as we can see, from Mr. Abbot. But, unlike him, he baptizes his religion in the name of Christianity, and has just issued his prospectus for a new magazine designed to ensure his opinions a wider diffusion.

Rev. J. L. Hatch writes concerning the Jesus of Dr. Peabody, as well as that of Henry Ward Beecher, "It is time for some one to say, Stop! let us hear no more of this talk of Jesus. You have crowded out 'the real Jesus,' and substituted a 'distorted image,' a hideous idol who 'must be removed.' Let the 'real Jesus' be substituted for it if possible, by all means, but *at any rate* take this blasphemous caricature of him out of our sight. It is offensive in the extreme." ("The Radical," vol. iii, p. 241.)

There is another extract from "J. L. H." which we must quote. The late Henry C. Wright, not long ago, wrote and published two works which he entitled, "The Merits of Jesus Christ, and the Merits of Thomas Paine," and "The Holy Bible and Mother Goose." Mr. Wright, the author, maintains, according to J. L. H.'s account, that the merits of Jesus, as popularly considered, "are worth no more than those of Thomas Paine, or any other great and good man," and that "the Bible, however good in its way, is no more 'an infallible rule of faith and practice,' as the Orthodox dogma has it, than Mother Goose." Of these statements J. L. H. remarks that they are the "simple truth,"

and that the "author makes it clear as day." He adds, "As, according to Sidney Smith, some men are so stupid that they require a surgical operation before they can see the point of a joke, so there are not a few stolid pietists who absolutely need to be startled and shocked by such a declaration as that 'the blood of Jesus can no more wash away sin than the blood of Cock Robin,' before they will open their dull eyes to see what the teaching of reason and true religion is. On the whole, we believe in this straight-out, flat-footed, pointed, pungent way of putting things. If it repels some at first, it wins many at last. Truth cannot be too naked to suit our turn." ("The Radical," February, 1870.)

Rev. J. W. Chadwick says, in a sermon printed in the "Liberal Christian" of July 2, 1870, "What! not even say with Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' But who is certain that Peter ever said this, or that Jesus applauded the saying, as is recorded in the Gospels?"* No

* The "Radicals," while denying the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels, will yet often appeal to them as veritable history when it suits their purpose. Press upon them the claims which Jesus made to divine authority, and they tell you that the books or passages in which such claims appear are untrustworthy. But if they wish to establish an argument in behalf of "intuitional religion," or of some exclusively moral system, they do not hesitate to appeal to numerous detached and isolated portions of the evangelic records, as presenting the very words which were spoken and the very deeds which were wrought by Jesus.

A singular illustration of this inconsistency is before us. The language which the above article quotes from Mr. Chadwick was used by him with reference to a sermon preached by Rev. Mr. Putnam, of Brooklyn, from the text containing the confession of Peter and the approving words of the Saviour. "But who is certain," asks Mr. Chadwick, "that Peter ever said this, or that Jesus applauded the saying, as is recorded in the Gospels?" Yet in a previous article (see "Radical," vol. ii., p. 583), we find him referring to this identical language of the Master and his disciple as perfectly authentic. Our young friend's object in the earlier production was to set forth that we are not to accept any external authority, not even the Christ, but that "the soul is its own authority." He accordingly adduced the passage under consideration to show that even Jesus himself recognized and sanctioned this doctrine, in that he blessed Peter for his inward perception of who and what he himself was. "What wonder, then," says Mr. Chadwick, "that Jesus said to one of his disciples, 'Blessed art thou,' when he discovered that his faith in him was based on spiritual recognition of his truth in word and deed?" and more to the same effect. Now Mr. Chadwick was here eminently right, not only in accepting these words of Christ and Peter as veritable utterances, but also in the interpretation which he gave of them. It is just the interpretation Mr. Putnam gave in his discourse. No one denies that the truth, the Christ, is spiritually recognized. But Mr. Putnam

one is certain of it who knows anything about the way in which the Gospels were composed." He remarks of the Epistles of Paul, that they "are too subjective in their character to be of any value as materials for history," and also that "the question, 'What think you of Christ?' is a question which only critical historians can answer. It is as much a historical question as the reality of such a person as William Tell. Whatever the truth be in the matter, it is not 'a grand, all-comprehending truth.' No historical question can be that."

Rev. A. W. Stevens recently published a pamphlet edition of two of his sermons. In the "Christian Register" of May 21, 1870, may be found the extract: "Radicals go to Christ as one of the great teachers of religion, and they respectfully hear what he has to say; they take that and compare it with what others say, and with what they themselves know, and with what reason and conscience teach, and if they find he teaches true, they accept his doctrine; but if they find he is mistaken, as they think he sometimes is, they simply pass on to that which is truer. They decline to receive anything as true merely because he said it. That is all."

A correspondent of the "Christian Register" (Sept. 3, 1870), with the initials, "X. Y. Z.," asks, with most pertinent force, "Is it not a humiliating comment on the administration of the affairs of a professedly Christian denomination, that a man who repudiates Christ and Christianity, who declares, in the presence of three witnesses who are still living, that 'the four Gospels are pious bosh,' can retain one of its pulpits and be treated as a Christian minister?" And the writer adds, "Notwithstanding expressed doubts, this and other similar expressions by ministers can be proven." No

would say that when Jesus *is* thus inwardly discovered to be "*truth in word and deed*," he is seen to be the Christ he claimed to be, and as such is clothed with divine authority. Was it that Mr. Chadwick unwittingly made use of this passage in the interest of radical philosophy, not seeing its full scope and drift; but afterward, realizing whither such an acceptance of it must conduct him, rejected it as spurious? Perhaps we ought rather to say that his rejection, as untrustworthy, of that which before he regarded as authentic, is another of the results of "the restless search of all the ages after truth."

more serious charge has been made than this, which we find in one of the columns of the "Register;" and we demand of the editor that he shall tell us *who* "X. Y. Z." is, *who the "living witnesses" are, when and where these words were spoken, at what precise spot, and at what hour of the day!*

"Can be proven!" Such or similar words are so frequent and so open that they cannot be hidden. They are found in connection with much of our current denominational literature; they appear in many a printed sermon and lecture; they are not unknown to our ministerial gatherings and our public conventions or conferences; they are more common yet in our theological schools and in private conversation. More common and familiar are they with every passing year; and, bad as may often be the printed word, the spoken word is often worse, as many a shocked and grieved parishioner can testify. Not seldom the most objectionable articles which appear in our magazines and journals, and which, it may be, have been previously given in oral discourse or address, are eliminated of not a little of their most offensive thought and phraseology before our editors dare to give them to the public. What we have quoted above will suffice for the present to indicate the general nature and extensive prevalence of this growing evil.

But Messrs. Weiss, Longfellow, Frothingham, Bartol, Towne, Hatch, Chadwick, Stevens, and Mann, together with Mr. Potter and various others from whom we might quote to the same effect, — Year-Book ministers, all of them, — are "straight-out, flat-footed" men. There is a more numerous class of our ministers still, who believe substantially as they do, and who have far more vital sympathy with Mr. Parker than with Dr. Channing, but who seldom offend their hearers by startling sayings and objectionable phraseology, and so more quietly move on in their ministerial work. Thoughtful and devout men and women listen to their words and come away feeling that, though not much is said to wound or shock, a great deal is left *unsaid* which they would be glad, and which they have a right, to hear. The beloved name of Christ is studiously omitted from prayer and benediction. No reverent allusion, perhaps, is made to him in the sermon. Hymns and Scriptural lessons are carefully selected so as to avoid any cordial recognition of him as the

Son and Christ of God, and the Saviour of the world. An insidious influence pervades such a ministry, the effect of which is to create the idea or the impression that Christianity is not necessarily connected with Jesus Christ. Of course the result is, naturally and generally, the decline of a positive faith, the decay of church life, the abandonment of the Lord's Supper, the rite of baptism, and public worship and private devotion. Here and there, bright, talented, enterprising, energetic men may succeed in keeping together a society, or even in causing it to grow in numbers, notwithstanding their radicalism ; but the rule is, degeneracy and death.

Now we have an earnest word to say to the churches in relation to this general subject. In order that two schools or parties may walk together, in full fellowship and united service, they must be agreed in their view, at least, of fundamental things. Unitarians, as well as other denominations, have in the past recognized Jesus Christ as the foundation on which they have built, as the Head of the Christian church, as the one great Teacher and Saviour of men. It would seem, therefore, that here is something about which they must be substantially agreed in thought and sympathy, in order that they may do any noble and efficient work in behalf of the Christian religion. But what if, while one party believe and teach with Channing that the Gospels are “true” and that Jesus Christ is “the Son of God, the theme of prophecy, the Revealer of grace and truth, the Saviour from sin, the Conqueror of death, who hath left us an example of immaculate virtue, whose love passeth knowledge, and whose history, combining the strange and touching contrasts of the cross, the resurrection, and a heavenly throne, surpasses all other records in interest and grandeur,” — the other party with one breath declare that we do not know “what Jesus was, nor what he did,” that his “earliest records” are of “no value as materials for history,” and that “the four Gospels are pious bosh ;” while with the next they say that Jesus was “not without errors, not without the stains of his time,” and “not without sins ;” that he and his disciples, “being among the earliest, were, in some respects, the poorest fruit” of the “indwelling divinity ;” that when we adopt the Scripture language concerning him, we only

make "a fetish;" and that "the blood of Jesus Christ can no more wash away sin than the blood of Cock Robin"?

Men and brethren of the Unitarian Churches! We submit that persons holding such diametrically opposite, antagonistic views of the New Testament and of Jesus Christ cannot and ought not to be associated together in any work that assumes the sacred name of Christianity, and that professes to seek the proper objects and ends of the Christian church. They may work together in other ways and for other purposes, if they can and will. But in regard to these transcendent interests of the Gospel faith, there must be some vital union in belief, as well as in spirit, else all will go wrong. What one will do, another will undo. What one will say, the other will unsay. There will be constant clashing and conflict. No effective work will be accomplished. The Christ will be stricken down in the house where he ought to be honored. Who of our ministers does not know that it is often the case that some Channing Unitarian will go out to do missionary work by preaching a positive living Christianity, only to be followed perhaps the very next week by a Parker Unitarian who avails himself of the opportunity to try to unsettle the faith of his hearers in the Bible as the Word of God, and in Jesus as the Christ? The minds of the audience are, of course, more perplexed than ever, and are disgusted, as well they may be, with this thing which we call Unitarianism, and which is so absolutely contradictory in itself, — even if they are not disgusted with Christianity and the Christian church altogether. Is this the way to extend the gospel and build up the Messiah's kingdom? Nay, every such effort is worse than futile. It discourages, if it does not paralyze, the faith of those who believe. It strengthens unbelief and works demoralization. The land is strewn, we had almost said, with the wrecks and ruins of just such abortive enterprises as we have described.

No, brethren, Scripture and History alike attest the fact that only as a church is armed with a mighty and absolute faith in Jesus Christ as the Master and Lord of men, can it accomplish its legitimate warfare and deserve a place in the ranks of the Church Universal. There must be no compro-

mise, or equivocation, or uncertainty here. About many other things we may differ, but not about this. If we pull down, or even lower the flag which has this inscription on its folds, we may as well count ourselves out of the conflict, while the great Christian Church, with a firmer faith and a more fixed purpose, sweeps triumphantly by, to the final victory.

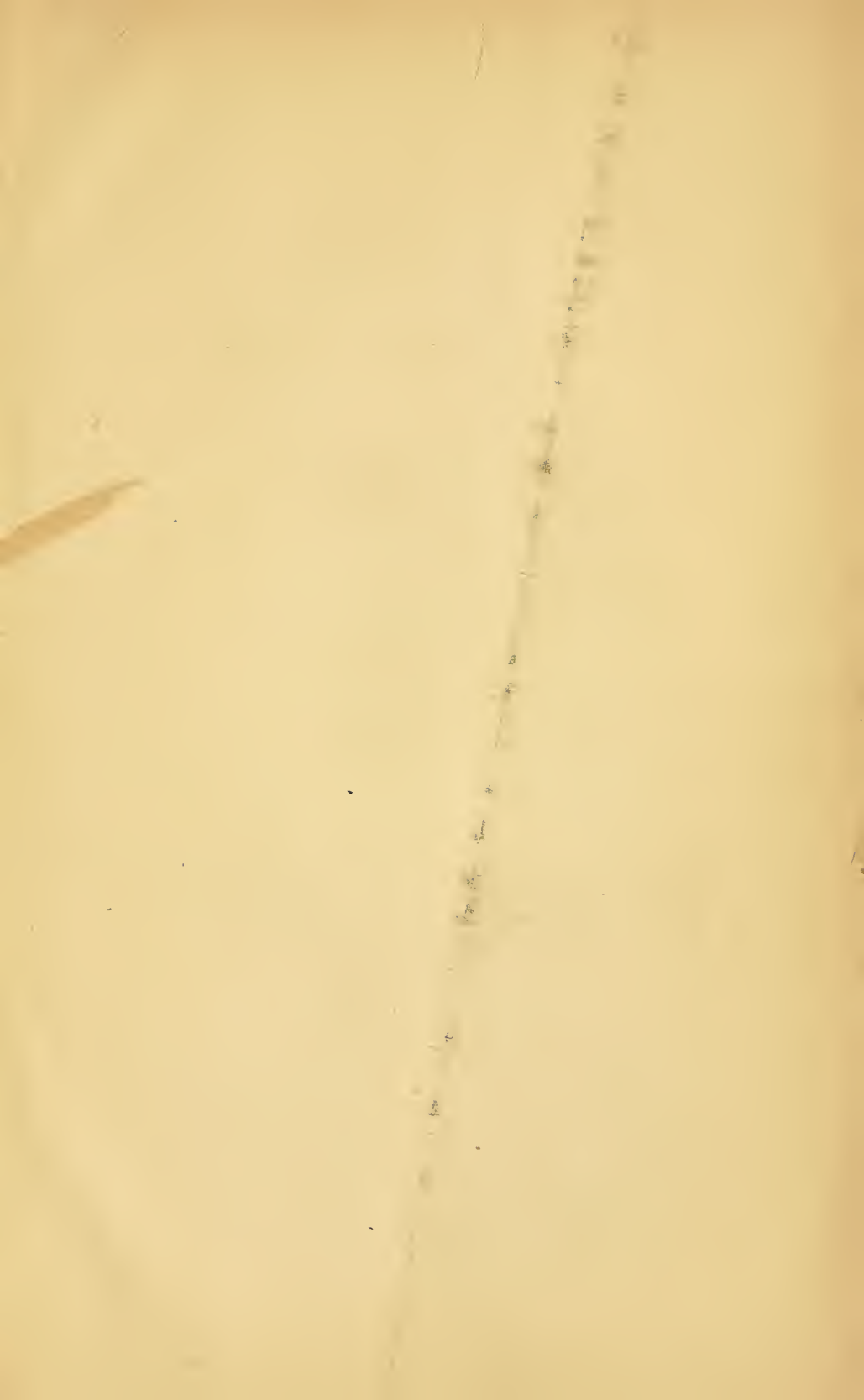
It is in vain that men plead "union in the Spirit," "the spirit of Jesus," and the like. We all know what that means. It is meant to "hide a multitude of sins." Men, while they talk smoothly about "union in the Spirit," and "the spirit of Jesus," are endeavoring to strip off the Saviour's seamless robe, and are outraging the sanctities which evermore are associated with his person and his name. This double dealing has got to stop; and the most effectual way to end it is by giving ministers to understand that Christianity has to do with *belief* as well as *sentiment*.

Equally useless is it to seek to blind men to the great issue by a general scream for "Liberty" and "Progress." The latter is not the issue now before us. Everybody in this country has the most unbounded liberty of thought and speech, and he is permitted to make just as much progress in all lawful pursuits as he can. He who thinks that, at such a time and under such circumstances, he is going to immortalize himself as a champion of Freedom, little understands the age in which he lives, and what God requires of him. We know how favorite a theme this is with many of our people, who have not kept along with the onward movement of things enough to know just where we all are and what the times demand of us. Nothing delights them more than the old, familiar, hackneyed strain; and he who indulges in it, whether from sincere love of it, or for lack of something fresher to say, is sure to be rewarded by the hearty applause of his hearers. But we have had quite enough of this, and we must not allow these continually shouted platitudes, however earnest or well meant, to blind us to the appropriate duties and calls of the hour.

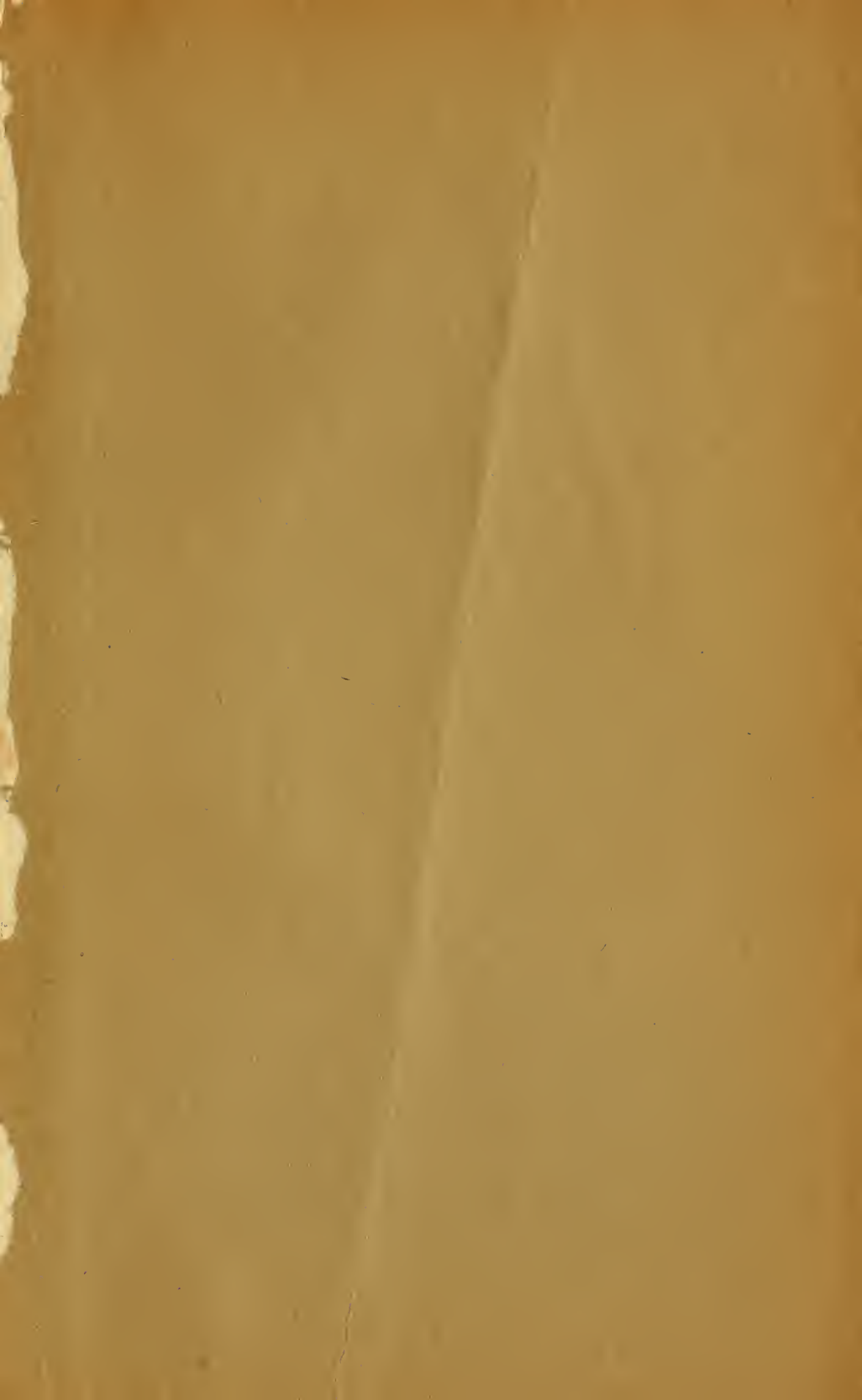
Nor does it avail to say that those who, in reference to the New Testament and Jesus Christ, use such awful language as we have quoted, are highly intelligent, gifted, spiritually

minded men, and that we cannot afford to lose them. We have yet to learn that the Church of Christ does not exist by the wit or will of man, and does not depend for its life and its future on this individual or that, or on any school or sect. The one duty of every body of Christians is to take its position, squarely and immovably, let who will, come or go. Its policy and its faith must not be shaped or directed with reference to persons and parties. It must not give out, or think for a moment, that it lives by suffrage. It must live in God, in God's Christ. *There* must be the hiding of its power. Then will it have large increase, whatever *men* may say or do. But, to be true to our honest thought, we should say that the radical element in our denomination is our element of weakness. It is that which neutralizes all internal effort, and creates distrust and fear without. Its spirituality, if not its ability, is vastly overrated, as the extracts we have quoted sufficiently show. Its spirit and purposes have not been improved by those who have flattered it, in the vain hope to control it and make it a healthy part of the body. The better course would be to show it plainly its errors and offenses, and how much it needs the grace of God, while it should not be permitted, in its unchristian attitude, to dilute the faith, enfeeble the energies, and destroy the life of the denomination.

The great question we are called upon to decide cannot be postponed. It is before us. Management and trick may crowd it out of one meeting, but it will come up in another. It must be met and settled. It will not do to cry "Schism," "Bigotry," "Orthodoxy," "Bondage," or whatever else. We know that we are in a line with the fathers who have gone before us. We stand on the rock which is Christ. We feel that we are right, and we are in earnest. Finally, there are many who are saying, in the words of that venerated and lately departed saint of our communion, Rev. N. L. Frothingham, D.D., "If Liberal Christianity means only an unbounded license of speculation,—recognizing nothing as fixed, admitting any extremes of opinion as the fair results of its free principle,—my place is not there. Unto that assembly, O my soul, be not thou united."







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